

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

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P R 291226Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9467

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 13007

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, FR

SUBJECT: JACQUES CHIRAC, NEW PRIME MINISTER OF FRANCE

1. SUMMARY: FRANCE'S NEW PRIME MINISTER IS A YOUNG,
SINEWY POLITICIAN WITH THE RIGHT CREDENTIALS, HIGHLY
AMBITIOUS, AND A TOUGH DEFENDER OF FRENCH INTERESTS.

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WE EXPECT HE WILL CONCENTRATE ON DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, WITH

FOREIGN POLICY THE CONTINUED PRESERVE OF THE ELYSEE.
GISCARD WILL BE THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, AND CHIRAC WILL
FOLLOW HIS ORDERS. PART OF THE UDR IS HOSTILE TO
CHIRAC, AND HE WILL HAVE DIFFICULTIES IN HIS RELATIONS
WITH PARLIAMENT, ALTHOUGH WE EXPECT HIM TO COMMAND A
SOLID MAJORITY IN THE ASSEMBLY. END SUMMARY.

2. JACQUES CHIRAC AT 41 IS SEVEN YEARS YOUNGER
THAN GISCARD. CONSIDERED A POLITICAL ANIMAL, HE
REPRESENTS TWO THINGS: A NEW GENERATION OF POLITICIANS
WHO ARE NOT DIRECT HEIRS OF DE GAULLE AND ARE
THEREFORE RELATIVELY UNINHIBITED BY GAULLIST RHETORIC
AND PAST POSITIONS, AND A REMARKABLE PERSONAL
OPPORTUNISM WHICH BROUGHT HIM TO BEFRIEND POMPIDOU'S
CLOSEST PERSONAL ASSOCIATES INCLUDING THE GARAUD FAMILY
AND MADAME DUPUY. FOR THE LAST 12 YEARS, CHIRAC HAS
THUS BEEN CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE BRIGHT YOUNG MEN OF
THE MAJORITY, A "YOUNG WOLF" WHO BENEFITED CONSIDERABLY
FROM HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH PIERRE JUILLET, POMPIDOU'S
GREY EMINENCE, AND JACQUES FRIEDMANN, MESSMER'S
CONFIDANT. CHIRAC IS MUCH MORE A POMPIDOLIAN THAN A
GAULLIST. HE WAS A PROTEGE OF POMPIDOU AND OWES MUCH
OF HIS FAST RISE TO THE LATE PRESIDENT.

3. THE FORMER MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR IS HIGHLY
AMBITIOUS. CHIRAC STAGE-MANAGED THE "DECLARATION OF
43," A JOINT STATEMENT BY A GROUP OF MAJORITY DEPUTIES
AND MINISTERS WHICH CALLED FOR A SINGLE MAJORITY
CANDIDACY AND THUS NEATLY SKEWERED CHABAN'S HOPES FOR
A UNITED ANTI-GISCARD FRONT. THE ORIGINAL 43
SIGNATORIES WERE EXPANDED TO 56 AND THEN CUT BACK TO
53; EACH STEP WAS ACCOMPANIED BY CHIRAC-ORIGINATED
PUBLICITY. IN ADDITION, HE WAS PROBABLY RESPONSIBLE
FOR LEAKS FROM THE RENSEIGNEMENTS GENERAUX (THE
INTERIOR MINISTRY'S POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE ARM) WHICH
PROVIDED EARLY AND SEMI-OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION OF
CHABAN'S DROP IN POPULARITY. THUS CHIRAC EARLY TIED
HIS OWN POLITICAL FUTURE TO GISCARD'S FORTUNES.

4. THE NEW PRIME MINISTER HAS THE RIGHT CREDENTIALS:
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HE COMES FROM A WEALTHY FAMILY, ATTENDED THE "RIGHT"

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P R 291226Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9468

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 13007

SCHOOLS (INSTITUTE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, NATIONAL SCHOOL OF ADMINISTRATION) AND BEGAN HIS CAREER IN THE PRESTIGIOUS POSITION OF AUDITOR FOR THE COUR DES COMPTES WHERE HE RECEIVED AN EXCEPTIONAL TWO PROMOTIONS IN THREE YEARS (1959-1962), WITH AN EIGHT-MONTH PERIOD IN THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR ALGERIAN AFFAIRS. IN 1962 CHIRAC MOVED TO POMPIDOU'S
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STAFF WHERE HE HAD SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROBLEMS OF INVESTMENT, PUBLIC WORKS AND TOURISM. HIS FIRST MAJOR POST CAME IN 1967 WHEN HE WAS NAMED SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT; IN THE SAME YEAR, HE WAS ELECTED UDR DEPUTY FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE CORREZE -- A CONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEMENT IN THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAD LONG BEEN A LEFT STRONGHOLD WITH A LARGE COMMUNIST VOTE. HE WAS REELECTED BY COMFORTABLE MARGINS IN 1968 AND 1973. IN MAY 1968 CHIRAC BECAME SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ECONOMY AND FINANCES, A POST WHICH HE HELD THROUGH THE PRIME MINISTERSHIPS OF POMPIDOU, COUVE DE MURVILLE AND CHABAN-DELMAS UNTIL HE WAS MADE MINISTER-DELEGATE FOR PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS IN JANUARY 1971. THUS HE DID HIS APPRENTICESHIP IN THE FIELD OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCE UNDER GISCARD.

5. NAMED MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE IN JULY 1972, CHIRAC BUILT UP AN IMPORTANT FOLLOWING AMONG FRENCH FARMERS AS A RESULT OF HIS HISTRIONIC AND COMBATIVE DEFENSES OF FRENCH AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS AT THE EC IN BRUSSELS. THIS POPULARITY RAN COUNTER TO THE POMPIDOLIAN CREDO THAT MINISTERS SHOULD NOT BUILD SPECIAL CONSTITUENCIES OF THEIR OWN. BY TRANSFERRING CHIRAC IN MARCH 1974, DURING THE MESSMER CABINET SHUFFLE, TO INTERIOR -- A POST WHICH TRADITIONALLY MAKES ITS OCCUPANT RESPONSIBLE FOR A NUMBER OF ACTIONS WHICH PRESS AND PUBLIC ALIKE CRITICIZE WITH GLEE -- POMPIDOU AND MESSMER MAY HAVE HOPED TO REIN IN CHIRAC'S BURGEONING POLITICAL PRESENCE. HIS DEPARTURE FROM THE AGRICULTURE MINISTRY WAS PUBLICLY REGRETTED BY THE AGRICULTURAL UNIONS.

6. CHIRAC IS A BARE-KNUCKLED ADVERSARY WHO VALUES TOUGHNESS. IN SOME GOVERNMENT CIRCLES HE IS KNOWN AS THE "BULLDOZER" (SAID TO BE POMPIDOU'S NAME FOR HIM) BECAUSE OF HIS COMBATIVE ATTITUDE. HE COUPLES A GREAT ADMIRATION FOR THE MILITARY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ITS "MISSION" WITH A RESPECT FOR AMERICAN POLITICAL RHETORIC. HE HAS DESCRIBED HIS TWO YEARS AS A TANK SQUADRON COMMANDER IN ALGERIA (1957-1959) AS THE MOST CONFIDENTIAL

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EXCITING YEARS OF HIS LIFE AND HAS FREQUENTLY PRAISED THE MILITARY'S ALL-OUT DEVOTION TO DUTY. HIS RHETORICAL AND NEGOTIATING STYLE IS BASED ON HIS READING OF AMERICAN LESSONS -- HE IS TOUGH, COLD, UNDIPLOMATIC, CANDID AND TENDS TO GO OUTSIDE THE NORMAL PROCESSES OF GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES TO BUILD

POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE MEASURES HE WISHES TO
UNDERTAKE. HE COMES ACROSS AS A BRILLIANT YOUNG
TECHNOCRAT WHO LACKS A HUMAN TOUCH. ONE OF HIS CLOSE
ASSOCIATES HAS TOLD HIM THAT WHEN TALKING TO PEOPLE
CHIRAC SHOULD LOOK THEM IN THE EYE AND NOT GIVE THE
IMPRESSION HE ALWAYS HAS A TRAIN TO CATCH. LE POINT
MAGAZINE EARLIER CARICATURIZED HIM AS "DEAF TO ANY
DISAGREEMENT, UNMOVED BY ANY NEW IDEAS (HE READS
NOTHING), SUSPICIOUS OF ANY INNOVATION."

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7. HE IS FASCINATED BY THE UNITED STATES AND IS PROBABLY AS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD THE US AS ANYONE ON GISCARD'S TEAM. CHIRAC SPENT THE SUMMER OF 1953 STUDYING AT HARVARD AND THEN WORKED HIS WAY ACROSS THE COUNTRY. HE TOOK AWAY A LOVE FOR THE PHYSICAL BEAUTY OF THE UNITED STATES, A HEALTHY RESPECT FOR THE
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AMERICAN ATTITUDE TOWARD CIVIL LIBERTIES AND, ODDLY, A TASTE FOR AMERICAN COOKING (HE USED TO COME TO THE EMBASSY INCOGNITO IN ORDER TO EAT WHAT HE CONSIDERED "REAL AMERICAN FOOD").

8. DURING HIS STUDENT DAYS AT SCIENCES PO, CHIRAC FLIRTED WITH LEFTIST CAUSES AND EVEN SIGNED THE STOCKHOLM APPEAL AGAINST THE ATOMIC BOMB (IN 1950). ALTHOUGH HE HAS TERMED THIS EPISODE "A MISTAKE," IT SUGGESTS THAT PART OF CHIRAC'S STYLE IS AN ALL-OUT COMMITMENT TO CAUSES AND A WILLINGNESS TO TAKE QUICK AND SERIOUS ACTION ON THEM.

9. POLITICAL INTIMATES OF BOTH CHIRAC AND GISCARD HAVE IT THAT CHIRAC, IN HIS ROLE AS INTERIOR MINISTER, EARNED THE RESPECT OF MICHEL PONIATOWSKI, GISCARD'S TOP CONFIDANT AND MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH UNDER MESSMER, BY USING THE CANARD ENCHAINE AFFAIR AS A DEVICE FOR GETTING RID OF THE VESTED LEADERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL POLICE.

10. CHIRAC HAS BEEN CALLED UNFASHIONABLE BY THE PARIS PRESS FOR WEARING SUITS OF AN UNCERTAIN CUT AND DARK GREY OVERCOATS. TALL (6 FEET 2) AND STERNLY HANDSOME, HE HAS A COMMANDING, ATHLETIC PRESENCE. HE SMOKES EXTRA-LONG AMERICAN CIGARETTES. HE IS A GOOD SKIER. HE IS MARRIED TO THE FORMER BERNADETTE CHODRON DE COURCEL AND HAS TWO DAUGHTERS. HE SPEAKS ENGLISH.
IRWIN

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